Pre-course reading assignment – Hardball

Due: First Monday of the new semester: January 24, 2010

Assignment:

1. After reading Chris Matthews’ book, Hardball, **update** his book by incorporating lessons learned from President Obama’s 2010 successes and failures (success and failure from Obama’s perspective). Your essay should clearly describe three of the lessons (other than wholesale/retail politics) that Matthews teaches using events of the past year (at least 3 separate and distinct examples) to bring the book up to date. At least one of the lessons should deal with the Administration and the lame duck Congressional session that just ended. Please do not be superficial in your analysis. Feel free to use lessons from the 2010 political year that are inconsistent with Matthew’s theories as well.
2. On a separate page (epilogue), elaborate which political style (wholesale, retail etc…) you feel is most consistent with your character and personality and relevant examples in your own life to support it. Make sure that you fully understand the difference between wholesale and retail politics.
   1. NOTE: Wholesale politics at a high school does not mean making speeches, having rallies or other national campaign types of strategies.

Your essay should be typed and approximately 3 ½ to 5 typed pages in length (2x spaced, don’t 4x space between paragraphs), plus a ½ to ¾ page epilogue.

You will be graded on your factual presentation, synthesis of the material, as well as the structure and format of your essay.

Citations are not necessary.

NOTE: In analyzing the lessons of Hardball you need not simply find that every move by President Obama was good or bad. Political analysis should be dispassionate and intended to better understand the process. Try to develop what what traits tend to help a person in the political process and which tended to diminish their ability to get what they wanted.